The meeting discussed the setting up an energy ring in South Asia and promotion of regional cooperation in the Energy sector.

xvi. The second conference of the SAARC Communication Ministers was held in Islamabad on June 29-30, 2004. The Indian delegation to the conference was led by Shri Dayanidhi Maran, Minister for Communications and Information Technology. The SAARC Ministers discussed ways to promote regional cooperation.

Assistance for Kailash Mansarovar Yatra

† 436. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Central assistance being provided to the Government of Uttaranchal for Kailash Mansarovar Yatra; and

(b) whether there is any proposal to provide subsidy for the same on the lines of "Haj pilgrimage" in order to make this Yatra more comfortable and convenient?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED) (a) and (b) Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) provides Rs. 3,250/- per Yatri to Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN) to partially offset the expenditure incurred by the Yatris. (KMVN) arranges board and lodging for Yatris on the Indian side. Government provides free medical inspection and assistance security and escort cover upto Lipulekh Pass, insurance cover and communication links for the duration of the Yatra. A Liaison Officer is attached to each batch of Yatris at Government expenditure. MEA also coordinates the Yatra.

It is the constant endeavour of the Government to make this Yatra more comfortable and convenient.

Nuclear confidence building measures between India and Pakistan

† 437. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA:
SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in continuation of improving Indo-Pak relations India and Pakistan discussed specific Nuclear Confidence

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.